



## ***TASK FORCE LIBERTY*** ***Press Release***

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**FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq** – As Iraqi security forces take over more combat operations and Iraq moves toward elections, the country's diverse tribes, municipalities and businesses in North-Central Iraq are coming forward to represent Iraq's interests over their own – a marked shift from the factionalism perpetuated by Saddam Hussein's regime, and another sign that Operation Iraqi Freedom, together with the people of Iraq, has wrought change in a nation once divided against itself.

Iraqi security forces at a checkpoint south of Baqubah recently repulsed an insurgent assault. The security forces returned fire, pursued their attackers and overtook their van, detaining six and wounding one. A search of the van yielded several small arms and a RPG launcher and rounds. In Muqdadiyah, Iraqi and Task Force Liberty Soldiers conducted a raid July 22 and captured a suspected anti-Iraqi force member linked to recent improvised explosive device (IED) activity in the area. Two cell phones, three passports and various IED-making materials were seized. Iraqi soldiers conducted a raid near the village of Hanshi based on tips that terrorists were in the area. The soldiers took fire when they entered the village but quickly suppressed it, killing three, wounding three and detaining one terrorist.

As usual, Iraqi citizens are helping Coalition Forces and Iraqi security forces find and take down insurgents. In mid-July, Dibis Police and Iraqi soldiers followed a citizen's lead and discovered an IED near a waterline. The Kirkuk Iraqi Ordnance Disposal disarmed the IED and gave it to Coalition Forces for destruction. In Al Mutasam, a citizen's tip led to the apprehension of two suspected IED makers on July 25. On August 2, tips led elements of the 4th Iraqi Army Battalion to 29 various unexploded munitions. In Nargis, information from an Iraqi citizen led to a raid by Iraqi and Coalition Force

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Soldiers. The raid located four artillery rounds rigged as IEDs. Four individuals believed to be part of an IED cell were detained.

Even as they take over more of the fight, Iraqi security forces are simultaneously building into their organizations the means and training to win it. Iraqi soldiers recently installed add-on armor to increase the security and effectiveness of their patrols. In Diyala, Iraqi soldiers concluded a Combat Life Saver training course July 24. In addition to emergency first aid, students were taught how to administer an IV. An increase in attacks on Iraqi security forces and first responders made the need for qualified Iraqi combat life savers imperative. A mounted gunnery training course at Garyantes Range demonstrated the Iraqi security forces' ability to learn and utilize all the equipment in their arsenal. This arsenal of democracy includes people, such as the first female Iraqi police officer, who graduated from the training academy at Al Sulaymaniyah July 23.

Along with owning the fight, Iraqi security forces are assuming control of bases. Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Army Battalion and Coalition Forces conducted the transfer of authority ceremony of Forward Operating Base Omaha July 30. Forward Operating Base Scunior in Diyala Province followed on July 31.

Reconstruction is going on all over Task Force Liberty's area of operations. In Bayji, Task Force Liberty Soldiers inspected an ongoing bridge project with the local contractor July 26. When complete, the bridge will reconnect Al-Bayji Island with the city of Bayji. With the new employment opportunities in the area, more villagers are able to construct homes in Morbat Karha village. The new construction will accommodate school teachers moving into the village and in turn increase educational opportunities for village children. The Koncha Qul Secondary School for Girls added new classrooms July 27 due to a large number of people moving back into the Taza area. Construction workers are laying thousands of feet of pipe to bring fresh drinking water to nine villages in the Sami Al Assi area, saving villagers the labor of hauling drinking water for miles. On July 31, Task Force Liberty Soldiers began a water pipe project to bring fresh water to 250 Iraqis in the Abu Jarin region.

Community leaders are now lending a hand in Iraq's recovery and drive toward stability. The mayor of Khan Bani Sa'd and former regime generals Ra'ad and 'Ata met

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recently to discuss possible joint efforts to maximize their local influence to improve Iraq's quality of life. Despite their different backgrounds and different ideas, each leader agreed working together will improve security and quality of life for the citizens of Iraq. Coordinated by a local Muktar, a recently completed \$54,000 project has turned on the lights in an Al Hussein neighborhood of over 3000 people. Begun under Saddam's regime and formerly known as Saddam Apartments, the community has been without functional lighting for more than six years. Local workers completed the project. Sheik Shamir met with a Coalition Forces commander in mid-July to discuss how he could help bring business and employment opportunities to his area. The meeting focused on the increased role of non-governmental organizations. Job Corps representatives and the Kadasia Sheiks met July 31 to discuss the Job Corps and its main purpose - ensuring members of all tribes are given equal employment opportunities and less fortunate people of the community are employed to clean up their towns.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Violence**

In the last two weeks, operations in the Task Force Liberty area of operations have resulted in six anti-Iraqi forces killed, two wounded and 395 detained. Significant ammunition seized included 606 rocket, mortar, artillery and tank rounds, 62 small arms weapons and grenades, 2,211 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 12 mines, one rocket-propelled grenade launcher and 15 rocket-propelled grenade rounds. Major equipment captured included four machine guns, 3,812 anti-aircraft rounds, nine surface-to-air missiles, 6,293 pounds of explosives, 15 pounds of propellant, 442 assorted fuses, one illumination round, a set of night-vision goggles and \$15,000. Within the division's area of responsibility, 56 IEDs were discovered prior to detonation, preventing the needless loss of life at the hands of anti-Iraqi forces.

**1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Raider).** Security, training, infrastructure and governance efforts moved forward in the 1st BCT's sector in late July and early August.

Based on a tip from an Iraqi civilian, Task Force Liberty Soldiers discovered two weapons caches August 5. Both caches consisted of mortar rounds, mortar charges, mortar tubes, hand grenades, RPG launchers with seven charges, multiple rifles, an

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assortment of artillery rounds and IED-making materials. The munitions were destroyed by Coalition Forces.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers began training the 10th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion (SIB) on basic infantry tasks August 1. The SIB soldiers began on the basics of rifle marksmanship and live-fire qualification. With training received from Coalition Forces, the SIB will be able to provide security for Iraq's oil pipelines and electric towers.

The District Election Office (DEO) opened its doors for voter registration August 5. The office is staffed by twelve workers, seventeen Iraqi police officers and soldiers of the 5th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion. The local Imams will broadcast the DEOs hours of operation during their Friday sermons.

The manager of the Al-Riash water station rallied the local populace to hire bulldozers and equipment to fix a broken thrust joint on the main water line to Al-Sekor village August 1. This water main supplies water to over 10,000 residents. The mayor of Tikrit met with the various sheiks of Khadasia August 2 to discuss their community challenges, including the assessment on building a new water plant, the pending authorization to turn on the power plant's new generators, \$150,000 funding for street lights and a project that involves two new electric transformers for Khadasia.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Sledgehammer).** The last two weeks saw training continue amid raids and coordination for upcoming elections to include voter security.

Iraqi soldiers raided three suspected insurgent target houses in Chibenat village and detained six individuals. A tip from a local citizen was responsible for a combined raid by Iraqi and Coalition Force Soldiers in the town of Sanar, Iraq. The raid resulted in the seizure of 10 AK-47s, 300 rounds of ammunition and insurgent propaganda. Four individuals were detained during of the raid. Task Force Liberty and Iraqi soldiers conducted a cordon and search of Nahr Al Imam August 6 to capture or kill insurgents suspected of IED and indirect fire attacks against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. Five suspected insurgents were detained. Task Force Liberty Soldiers met with Buhriz residents July 24 to discuss possible concerns about the current lock down of the city. The consensus among the residents is that they understand the reasons for the lock

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down and that it has reduced the amount of terrorist activity. One citizen said his children could now play in the streets in safety.

In Buhriz, the Iraqi army and police began manning checkpoints together July 20. The joint manning allows the two forces the opportunity to work together to build greater trust and confidence. Task Force Liberty and Iraqi army soldiers conducted battle drill rehearsals August 2 as part of company level training. Instructors began with classroom instruction and then moved outside where communication between squad members and the importance of rehearsals were emphasized. On August 5, Task Force Liberty and Iraqi army soldiers conducted training to fully prepare the leaders of the Iraqi army to conduct effective and independent operations. Instruction focused on reacting to improvised explosive devices.

In Diyala, Task Force Liberty Soldiers assessed the Kan'an voter registration site August 1 and provided the information necessary to maximize the security of the area during the voting process. Upon completion of the assessment, Coalition Forces made suggestions to Kan'an Iraqi army leaders in an effort to assist them in their planning process. During a media event August 5, the Diyala election commission director offered words of encouragement to the public in the political process, referencing the persecution and oppression under the former regime. This event also served as a first step toward influencing the Sunni population to participate in the political process during the upcoming Referendum of the Constitution and elections. The event included a demonstration on the registration process and a brief question and answer session.

Iraqi community leaders addressed medical needs recently. Kan'an city council members distributed six wheelchairs, donated by the Wheelchair Foundation, to disabled citizens July 23. The same day in Diyala, former Iraqi soldiers wounded in action were given wheelchairs. The local Iraqi army leadership and city council made it possible to distribute the donated wheelchairs by contacting the wounded and having them meet at the council building. The give away was so successful that the city council was able to gather over 20 citizens for a second event on July 25. Iraqi and Coalition Forces donated much needed medical supplies to a local clinic for displaced

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citizens in the Mukhisa area. These supplies will enable the clinic to provide better health care to the local populace.

Contractors are building a permanent Iraqi police station in northeast Samarra. The building will have at least six offices and serve as a headquarters for over 200 police officers. Iraqi security forces are watching over the construction to ensure a safe environment for the local contractors.

**116<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Warrior).** Kirkuk's hot weather has not hampered the mission of the 116th Brigade Combat Team, which is to support Iraqis as they strive to bring security, stability and economic progress to the province. Brigade operations focus on security, economic development, governance and communication as the Iraqi government enters the final stages of preparing the country's draft constitution.

Progress of Iraqi security forces in the province of Kirkuk has been marked by training, successful combined operations and increased citizen involvement. Elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 148th Field Artillery trained Iraqi leaders and soldiers of the 4th Iraqi Army Division in basic skills and staff leadership development. Iraqi Army units are preparing to conduct their second command post exercise.

Iraqi police are improving their capabilities and preparedness. One exercise tested communications between the Provincial Joint Coordination Center (JCC) and outlying JCCs in the entire province using telephones, cell phones, satellite phones and Internet. Iraqi police received uniforms, equipment and supplies from Coalition Forces and issued the items to their personnel using proper equipment control procedures.

Even as terrorists step up attacks on Iraqi civilians, successful combined operations with Iraqi security forces have kept the pressure on insurgents. Citizens are also stepping up to the plate to report terrorist activity. Civilian tips to Iraqi authorities have led to discoveries of unexploded ordnance and IEDs. Iraqi Army units have discovered and secured ammunition caches.

School renovations in the Hawijah area are continuing during summer break. The Hawijah water employees also received a well-earned raise. Daquq is experiencing a boom in economic development and the Sulaymaniah Airport held its grand opening in the past two weeks.

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The 116th BCT's governmental team is monitoring efforts to prepare for the announcement of the draft constitution and the ratification election to follow. The Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC) has been meeting twice a week. Government agencies, to include police, emergency services, army units, and the Independent Election Committee-Iraq, met July 26 to discuss security for this year's elections events. Arab leaders from the Hawijah area published a declaration condemning violence in local newspapers. The KPC chief council member and the Kirkuk Police Chief have also actively condemned terrorist violence over the past two weeks.

**278<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (The Volunteers).** The 278th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) from the Tennessee Army National Guard maintains its partnership posture with the Iraqi security forces, training and enabling them to establish safety and security in their nation.

Iraqi Border Enforcement opened a new battle school at a recently built border fort near Khanaqin. The school will train border police on common tasks which will help them secure Iraq against insurgents. There are 10 additional forts still being renovated along a 75-kilometer stretch of the Iranian border.

In another milestone for the Iraqi army, a medical platoon at FOB Bernstein near Tuz is now receiving its medical supplies through Iraqi army logistical channels. These supplies have previously been supplied by Coalition Forces.

Iraqi citizens are showing signs of trying to end the violence that has defined their country. On July 17, a citizen gave Soldiers from Troop I, 3rd Squadron information on possible unexploded ordnance near Muntheria. Responding to the information, Troop I found five 130mm artillery rounds and two 100mm artillery rounds at the location and destroyed them.

**42<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Brigade (Eagle).** As the Wings for Task Force Liberty, the 42nd Aviation Brigade is providing combat, combat support and combat service support. Highlights for this period include numerous weather difficulties, assisting with preparing for various operations including Great Shield, War Paint Mustang, Mossy Creek, Rattler Paradise City, Takedown, Bushmaster Breadfan, Able Assault, Cliff Hanger, VIP Escort and Task Force Exodus.

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The attack and cavalry assets of the Aviation Brigade, the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 229<sup>th</sup> Attack Helicopter and 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry are the division's mobile firepower. Despite setbacks due to weather, specifically dust storms which restrict visibility and heat, which affects aircraft performance, these two units flew 1,350 hours, including reconnaissance and cordon missions in support of the maneuver brigades. The capabilities and aggressive tactics of the aviators safeguards Soldiers and assure their success as Iraq moves toward autonomy.

The lift units have been exceptionally busy as well. Since flying is the quickest and safest way around the battlefield, both the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 150<sup>th</sup> Aviation and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 140<sup>th</sup> Aviation have been moving more people and cargo than ever throughout Task Force Liberty's area of operations. These two battalions have flown 990 hours in the second half of July, exceeding their projections by over 20 percent, all in an effort to keep Soldiers off roads and get them safely to their destinations. Besides flying the commanding general and his staff, these units have had the privilege of transporting several distinguished visitors, including the Polish prime minister.

**Division Engineers (Detonator).** Task Force Trailblazer of the 467th Engineer Battalion is finding IEDs that are placed on supply routes. In the last two weeks, they've found 74 IEDs before detonation. These teams patrol seven days a week, maintaining mobility throughout Task Force Liberty area of operations. Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams help neutralizing the IEDs. The lives of many Coalition Forces personnel rests on their shoulders. Task Force Trailblazer has been receiving additional specialized equipment which provides safe observation platforms from which the task force Soldiers can perform their assigned duties.

Soldiers of the 793rd Engineer Detachment (Utility) and Company C, 983rd Engineer Battalion have been concentrating their efforts on FOB realignment and closure. They are responsible for assisting in housing movement, utility connection and site preparation. In addition to these missions, they have also provided support to maintaining and improving the infrastructure on FOBs and patrol bases to make life safer and more bearable for everyone. Daily these Soldiers install, repair and improve plumbing and electrical equipment.

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The Engineer Brigade is also providing guidance and mentorship to the Iraqi Ministers of Power, Buildings-Health & Education, Security & Justice, Transportation, and Oil. They are also involved with emplacement of force protection measures for the infrastructure systems.

The Engineer Brigade has also taken over the responsibility to manage all munitions for the 42d Infantry Division. Consolidation of the two yards is underway at FOB Speicher.

**Division Support Command (Muleskinner).** Division Support Command (DISCOM) is supporting the 42nd Infantry Division and the growing Iraqi security forces. With redeployment efforts at full throttle, it has been an arduous task to keep supplies flowing.

Working with the DISCOM, the support operations officer for the Division Material Management Center Iraqi security forces cell has ensured a steady flow of equipment and supplies to the Iraqi security forces. As they take on more missions, more personnel from DISCOM's headquarters company are needed to support them. As Iraqi equipment continues to roll in, it is issued to the appropriate unit. There are over 100 Russian jeeps sitting in the Iraqi security forces warehouse awaiting onward movement.

The 50th Main Support Battalion is keeping their wheels rolling across the Iraq's dangerous road network. Several of their convoys have sustained attacks from insurgents. The battalion is well on the way to surpassing the amount of miles traveled and cargo transported by the 1st Infantry Division's 701st Main Support Battalion. The scope of missions has greatly increased with the addition of Iraqi security forces equipment and early retrogrades. The main support battalion's support operations officer works closely with the DISCOM support operations officer and movement control officer to coordinate road movement with Corps. Presently their mileage totals 826,358. They conducted 181 combat logistics patrols in Task Force Liberty's area of operations in late July. Early retrograde is becoming a priority.

The main support battalion has also supported patrols directly outside the base. Medics with the patrols stop and provide rudimentary medical support to locals.

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Recently, DISCOM medical personnel saved the life of an ailing Iraqi child. Maj. Michael Moore, a physician's assistant and Company E commander and Maj. Lisa Shivers, the Company E medical provider, treated a small child that had been turned away by Iraqi hospitals in Baghdad. After an emergency tracheotomy, she was flown to Balad where a life threatening growth was removed.

### **Conclusion**

Task Force Liberty and our Iraqi security forces partners are providing a safe and secure Iraq. We are working with the Iraqi security forces to neutralize the insurgency. We are training, coaching and supporting the Iraqi security forces as they develop their own independent capabilities to defeat the insurgency and improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. We believe in the future of Iraq. To our families, friends, employers and the American people, Task Force Liberty thanks you for your steadfast support and encouragement.

***Never Forget!***

**For more information on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty:**

**[www.42id.army.mil](http://www.42id.army.mil)**

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